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## Towards modeling the cognitive ecology of interpersonal language

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psychological well-being are examined as concomitant phenomena. Second, the actual usage of more than one language and consequent interpersonal evaluation is shown to result from the complex interplay of societal variables, including language norms and ethnolinguistic vitality. An integration of these two perspectives is proposed.

#### 441.2

##### **Accommodation in a culturally diverse, English-dominant context**

Gallois C., & Pittam J.

*University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia*  
While Australia is a highly multicultural country, non-English speaking immigrants must come to terms with the largely unquestioned dominance of English. This paper presents work on intercultural communication in English between native-born Australians and immigrants/sojourners, mainly from the Eastern Pacific Rim (Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese). What emerges clearly in this context is that ethnic group membership on its own is not adequate to explain intercultural accommodation in speech and vocal communication. The interaction of ethnicity with other group memberships (gender, age, occupational status), interpersonal factors, and the salience of each of these, must also be taken into account.

#### 441.3

##### **Social cognitive studies of intergenerational talk to older adults**

Ryan E.B.(1), & Hummert M.L.(2)

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Verbal and nonverbal features characteristic of several styles of patronizing communication to elderly people can be identified. Evaluation studies with conversational scenarios have permitted examination of numerous social variables on the perceived meanings of patronizing messages. Contrasting the perceptions of young adults, community seniors, institutional residents, and care providers has been of particular interest. A discussion of the functions and consequences of patronizing communication is organized around how the perceived need to accommodate to the frailty of the elderly person elicits overparenting, controlling, and dependence-supportive behaviours, and how these modifications limit the older persons opportunity for communicative success.

#### 441.4

##### **Towards modeling the cognitive ecology of interpersonal language**

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This paper reviews research which suggests that interpersonal language has cognitive fea-

tures that are independent of individuals but relies on conditions of social production. We shall argue that the use of such language is strategic in that different cognitive features of interpersonal language are used systematically to maximize specific intentions, goals, and motives. This type of strategic language use is illustrated in a number of research domains which shows that interpersonal language has functions similar to tools. Implications for social psychology and language are discussed.

## 442 SYM

### **Similarity and knowledge in categorization**

Convener: A. Vandierendonck

#### 442.0

##### **Similarity and knowledge in categorization**

Vandierendonck A.

*University of Ghent, Belgium*

Categories arise when objects or events are grouped together or are considered roughly equivalent for some purpose. Such an equivalence can be based on physical similarity, a perceived similarity, or a conceived similarity of the objects or events. Most of today's models of categorization and concept learning are based on an elaboration of the notions of physical or perceptual similarity. In the last decennium, several theorists have been proposing that similarity perception is highly knowledge dependent. Probably no one will doubt the interaction of perception and knowledge in similarity judgement. However, the real challenge seems to be how data and knowledge combine into perceived and conceived similarity and how their interaction advances (category) learning.

#### 442.1

##### **Categorical and functional knowledge in concept learning**

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Concepts are part of a knowledge store which encompasses the levels of categorical knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and implicit cognitive models. It is hypothesized that each representation level has a specific influence on the acquisition and the representation of new concepts. This is illustrated by data from a study in which subjects either were or were not presented categorical and functional knowledge before learning a new concept. These data show that prior functional and categorical knowledge affected acquisition and transfer performance. The implications of these findings for the conceptualization of the interaction of data and knowledge in concept learning are discussed.

#### 442.2

##### **The use of definitions in categorization**

Laroche S., & Archambault A.

*Université de Montréal, Québec, Canada*

In two experiments, subjects were asked to categorize descriptions of various artefacts, persons, natural and nominal kinds. Some descriptions asserted or negated properties that subjects had previously identified as defining the test category. Other descriptions contained merely characteristic properties. According to a probabilistic view of conceptual representation, categorization should be affected by the number of defining or characteristic properties in the descriptions. In contrast, the classical view predicts no effect of description size, when the properties are deemed defining. Neither view accounted for all results. Artefacts yielded the strongest evidence for the probabilistic view and nominal kind terms for the classical view.

#### 442.3

##### **Combining knowledge and new observations in models of category learning**

Heit E.

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Category learning has a highly interrelated nature, such that what is learned about a new category depends on prior knowledge of other related categories. A critical issue in categorization research is to identify the cognitive processes involved in integrating prior knowledge with new observations of category members. This issue was addressed with category learning experiments intended to distinguish between different process accounts. In these experiments, subjects learned about familiar categories in a new environment, so that previous knowledge and new observations both had an influence. The results have specific implications for incorporating previous knowledge into existing computational models of categorization.

#### 442.4

##### **Categories for odors: Where to find similarity?**

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(2) *CNRS, Université de Lyon I, France*

Most research and theories on categorization have been elaborated regarding visual objects, precisely described on physical parameters, in common sense and scientific knowledge. By contrast, odors are poorly understood as "stimuli" as well as perceptual categories, and Indo-European languages have not name for them. From experiments we conducted on categorization and naming of odors, we are led to reconsider not only how perceptual similarities and knowledge interact, but whether these descriptive conceptualizations are modality specific or not, and whether they remain relevant for elaborating a general model of categorization across modalities.